



**Wildfire 2003
Updates**

See Page 2

County of San Diego - Parks and Open Space Program

Contributing to the County of San Diego Strategic Plan Environment Initiative

"Promote natural resource management strategies that ensure environmental preservation, quality of life, and economic development"

**New County MSCP
Staff**

See Page 4

NORTH COUNTY MSCP SUBAREA PLAN UPDATE



Pauma Valley is one of the communities included in the North County MSCP Subarea Plan.

On July 17, 1996 (6), the Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Planning and Land Use to embark on the development of the North County MSCP Subarea Plan. This plan will cover the area north and east of Camp Pendleton to the Riverside County Line and East to the Cleveland National Forest boundary (approximately 357,132 acres).

County staff and their consultants have prepared a working draft map of the North County MSCP Subarea currently being reviewed by the Wildlife Agencies, the most recent referred to as Version 5.3. MSCP staff is completing the draft plan and implementing agreement and has initiated a request for proposals for consultant services to prepare a combined Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement. These efforts are being coordinated with the master planning of the San Luis Rey River Regional Park and the EPA-funded Ramona Vernal Pool Study.

Staff is also currently identifying and evaluating programs and grant opportunities that will provide meaningful incentives to agricultural property owners in or-

der to encourage species and habitat conservation on working landscapes.

MSCP staff has presented information and obtained input from citizens during several community outreach meetings and informational meetings with various stakeholders.

Future Activities

- Complete draft plan text, implementing agreement and biological mitigation ordinance.
- Meetings with various stakeholder groups to get their input regarding applicability of policies in the current MSCP to the North County Subarea Plan and whether additional issues need to be considered.
- Preparation of a Joint Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Impact Statement.
- Notice to all property owners within the North County Subarea Plan Subarea regarding the planning process and opportunities for participation and comment.
- Planning Commission workshop to provide an opportunity for the public to comment on the North County MSCP before finalization of environmental documentation.
- Planning Commission consideration of North County MSCP Subarea Plan and environmental documentation.
- Board of Supervisors consideration of North County MSCP Subarea Plan and environmental documentation.

We will keep you updated on the status of the North County MSCP Subarea Plan. Please call Jeremy Buegge at (858) 694-3719 for further information.



Fire Poppies at Goodan Ranch in April 2004

WILDFIRE 2003 INFORMATION

Following please find information and answers to frequently asked questions regarding the impact of the San Diego County wildfires on County Parks. Please visit the County Parks website at www.sdparks.org often for updated information.

Parks and open space preserves closed until public safety and natural resource protection are ensured:

El Capitan, Sycamore Canyon/Goodan Ranch (**TO OPEN AUGUST 12, 2004**), Mt. Gower, Oakoasis, Simon

Fire-damaged County parks that have been re-opened to the public:

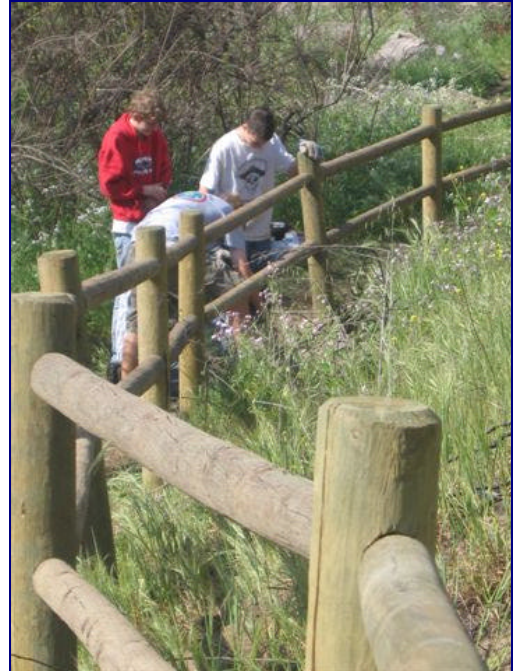
Hellhole Canyon Open Space Preserve, Lake Jennings, Louis Stelzer, South Lane, Volcan Mountain Open Space Preserve, William Heise.

If you would like to make a donation to a County park or open space preserve, please contact the San Diego County Parks Society at 619-267-7323 or sdcpsoc@aol.com.

Donations can also be mailed to San Diego County Parks Society, P.O. Box 957, Bonita, CA 91908. Please make checks payable to "San Diego County Parks Society." The San Diego County Parks Society is a 501-3c organization and all contributions made are tax deductible.

If you or your group would like to personally volunteer to help with park clean ups, call 858-694-3042 or e-mail nancee.hanson@sdcounty.ca.gov and leave your name, telephone number, and where you would like to serve.

POST-FIRE IMAGES



Eagle Scouts from La Mesa repair trail fencing at Mission Trails Regional Park



Ceanothus chaparral—Otay Mountain March 2004



FIRE ECOLOGY



Volcan Mountain, July 2004

San Diego County Parks and Recreation is offering unique opportunities for residents and visitors to come to fire damaged parks, see the regrowth, and learn about how nature restores itself after a wildfire. Park rangers will lead participants in informative hikes on the newly restored fire-damaged trails and will identify the effects of the wildfires, classify new vegetation and plant regrowth, and discuss wildlife recovery. Wear sturdy hiking boots, a hat and bring plenty of water. Hikes are free. Parking is \$2 per vehicle.

Volcan Mountain Open Space Preserve

Farmer's Road trailhead north of Wynola Road
Julian, CA 92036
760-765-4098

Meet at the trailhead at 9:00 a.m.
July 24, August 7, 21

William Heise County Park

4945 Heise Park Road
Julian, CA 92036
760-765-0650

Meet at Campsite 86 at
6:00 p.m.
July 31, August 14 and
September 25



Lillium humboldtii ocellatum



Louis Stelzer County Park

11470 Wildcat Canyon Road
Lakeside, CA
619-561-0580

As of 4/19/04, Fire Ecology has been included in the Discovery Kit program. Each week, Monday-Friday, organized fire ecology hikes and hands-on outdoor classroom instruction take place for 45 or more students in the park as part of the Discovery Kit program. The program is such a big hit that there is a waiting list for teachers and classes. For more information about Louis Stelzer County Park's Discovery Kit program, call 619-390-7998.

2003 MSCP ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

The following information was presented during a publicly noticed workshop on May 25, 2004 and to the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors on June 23, 2004. During 2003, 3,058.3 acres were gained and 482.6 acres were lost within the County MSCP Subarea.

As part of the gain above, the County acquired 1,781.99 acres in the following locations: Iron Mountain – 1,316.49 acres, Otay River Valley – 119.27 acres, Wright's Field - 120 acres, Tijuana River Valley – 225.98 acres, Imperial Beach – 0.25 acres.

Since the inception of the MSCP, the County and its partners have conserved through acquisition, dedication of easements and baseline preserve, 58,374.1 acres of land. In addition to these 58,374.1 acres, 18,434 acres of private baseline land that was committed through the County MSCP Subarea Plan will be dedicated in conformance with the Subarea Plan as future development occurs.



BIOLOGICAL MITIGATION ORDINANCE AMENDED

The Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO) is an ordinance that enables the County of San Diego to achieve the conservation goals set forth in the MSCP. On February 25, 2004, the Board of Supervisors amended the BMO to clarify that fuel management for fire protection purposes, when required in writing by a fire prevention or suppression agency, is exempt from the provisions of the BMO. The BMO was also codified as a part of the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances to include it within many other existing County regulatory ordinances for organizational purposes. As part of the County Code, the Ordinance will also be more readily accessible to the public on the County's website.

The BMO protects biological resources within the area covered by the MSCP and prevents their degradation and loss by guiding development to areas outside of biological resource core areas, and by establishing mitigation standards that are applied to discretionary projects, e.g., use permits, tentative maps, major grading permits, etc. The BMO currently includes limitations on fuel management based on the size of a parcel and its location within the MSCP. These limitations, though, exclude fuel management that is required pursuant to applicable fire safety regulations. Because this fuel management exclusion is included within regulations that limit clearing, the Department of Planning and Land Use added a separate exemption that more simply states that fuel management is exempt from the provisions of the BMO when authorized in writing by the fire agency having jurisdiction and consistent with the Memorandum of Understanding between the Fish and Wildlife Service of the United States Department of the Interior, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Department of Forestry, the San Diego County Fire Chiefs' Association and the Fire District's Association of San Diego County which was adopted in 1997. The proposed amendment will make the fuel management exemption more apparent and unambiguous.

THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO MSCP WELCOMES KIM ZUPPIGER



Kim Zuppiger is a Planner III in the MSCP Division at the County of San Diego. She is the project manager of the Riverway Trail Master Plan which includes

a 2.5-mile non-motorized regional trail alignment along the north side of the San Diego River in Lakeside. She is also assisting the Department of Parks and Recreation with the preparation of the San Diego County Trails Master Plan that will include 9 regional trails and 18 community trails plans within the unincorporated area of the County. Kim attended U.C. Irvine and received a B.A. in Social Ecology with a concentration in Environmental Health and Urban Planning. Her experience includes teaching environmental education programs to K-4 students at the City of Irvine's Turtle Rock Nature Center.

Kim grew up in Carlsbad and spent most her youth outdoors. Her favorite activities are camping, bike riding, hiking and swimming at the beach. Each summer, Kim assisted her father who taught science at Carlsbad junior and high schools. Occasionally, her family would combine an out of state summer teaching position with a trip across the country. Kim has visited many of the State and National Parks throughout the United States. Because of her keen interest in nature, she has taken marine biology field study courses in Bahia de Los Angeles, Mexico and Queensland, Australia. Besides travel, her hobbies include cooking, refurbishing furniture with broken tile, playing piano, snorkeling, sailing and enjoying the great outdoors. The MSCP is happy to have Kim on board and considers her a great asset to the program.

EAST COUNTY MSCP SUBAREA PLAN UPDATE

On June 23, 2004, the County of San Diego Board of Supervisors approved the Chief Administrative Officer recommendation to obtain consultant services to assist staff in the preparation of the East County MSCP Subarea Plan.

The East County MSCP Subarea Plan will cover 1,551,600 acres of unincorporated area east to the Imperial County line including the communities of Julian, Borrego Springs, Cuyamaca, Warner Springs, Jacumba, Campo, Ocotillo Wells, Boulevard, Pine Valley, Oak Grove, and Palomar Mountain. Like the existing subarea plans, the major goal of the East County Subarea Plan is to assemble a viable habitat preserve system which will allow the County to obtain coverage under the Federal and State Endangered Species Acts.

As in the existing South County and draft North County MSCP Subarea Plans, the East County MSCP Subarea Plan will allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game (Wildlife Agencies) to grant the County take authorizations for plants and animals that are listed, or are likely to become listed, in accordance with Federal and State Endangered Species Acts.

This Subarea Plan will include many of the same species covered in the existing South County and draft North County MSCP Subarea Plans but will also add some additional species -- most notably many mountain and desert species. Gaining coverage for these species will give the County permitting authority over development that impacts these listed species and will provide an effective and streamlined approval process for development projects in the County.



Cuyamaca meadow foam



Palomar Nate Harrison Grade State Park



San Felipe Valley looking toward Volcan Mountain



DID YOU KNOW?

THE SAN DIEGO MSCP WAS NAMED AS ONE OF THE EIGHT WONDERS OF SAN DIEGO IN A COLUMN BY RICHARD LOUV IN THE SAN DIEGO UNION TRIBUNE ON JULY 4, 2004

OVER 500 ACRES IN OTAY RANCH PRESERVE CONVEYED TO COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO AND CITY OF CHULA VISTA

Under the conveyance process described in the Otay Ranch Preserve Conveyance Plan, 1,188 acres of designated preserve land are to be dedicated for every acre of development land. On December 3, 2003, the Board of Supervisors accepted Irrevocable Offer of Dedication, covering 516.42 acres of land within the Otay Ranch Preserve and County of San Diego and City of Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plans for open space purposes. These IODs were the result of the approval of Final Maps filed by McMillin Otay Ranch LLC by the City of Chula Vista. These lands support a variety of species, including populations of *Quino checkerspot butterfly* and *California gnatcatcher*.



Entomologist David K. Faulkner M.Sc., assisting County with post-fire Quino surveys on Otay property.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA ACQUIRES LAND IN OTAY RANCH



Otay Ranch Preserve

On December 11, 2003, the California Coastal Conservancy approved \$13,826,298 to acquire land within the unincorporated area of Otay Ranch for open space to implement the state's Natural Community Conservation Program (NCCP), with funds provided by a Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) grant to the Conservancy for this purpose. Conservancy staff worked closely with the WCB, the California Department of Fish and Game, the Resources Agency, the County of San Diego, various local cities, and local community organizations, to identify key properties for acquisition and to assemble appropriate funds to implement this program.

The parcels acquired at the end of 2003 included (1) approximately 730 acres of Otay Ranch Village 15 south of Otay Lakes Road, south and east of Lower Otay Reservoir; and (2) approximately 560 acres along Otay Lakes Road, north and east of the Lower Otay Reservoir, to be added to the Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve managed by the California Department of Fish and Game. All of this land is within the San Diego MSCP Preserve.

Editor: Trish Boaz; **Contributors:** Thomas Oberbauer, Jeremy Buegge and Kimberly Zuppiger of Planning and Land Use; and Angela O'Shea, Amy Harbert, and Nancee Hanson of Parks and Recreation



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